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Rewriting the Savage: The Extraordinary Fictions of the "Wild Girl of Champagne"

Julia Douthwaite

> The vulgar will be entertained with this relation much in the same manner as they are with the history of Robinson Crusoe; but to the philosopher it will appear a matter of curious speculation, and he will draw from it consequences not so obvious to the generality of readers. He will observe with amazement the progression of our species from an animal so wild, to men such as we.
>
> —Monboddo, "Preface" in *Account of a Savage Girl Caught Wild in the Woods of Champagne*[1]

In September 1731, a strange, savage-looking girl was discovered in the country near Châlons-sur-Marne, France. The extraordinary appearance of this wild creature amid the bucolic plains of Champagne sent shock waves through the region and eventually captured the attention of writers and scientists throughout Europe. Although she was gradually "tamed" and re-formed as a Catholic nun, the girl's ambiguous existence on the boundaries of civilization fascinated the European intelligentsia.

Accounts of the wild girl of Champagne exemplify the great variety of conceptual devices for talking about savagery and civilization in eighteenth-century Europe; they run the gamut from pseudo-scientific inquiries into humanity's origi-

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nal nature and institutional schemes for improving society through control of "undesirables" to sensational fictions of exotic peoples and eyewitness views of anthropomorphic apes. Seeking to dispel (or to exploit) the archaic fears incited by this transgression on normal society, eighteenth-century writers captured the wild girl, so to speak, with well-known rhetorical strategies and familiar narrative frames, historically specific practices of interpretation and testimony. This essay retraces the taming of the wild girl of Champagne and assembles a composite story of her life as told by literary, scientific, and philosophical writers. By stressing the "fictional" qualities of these texts (from the Latin *fingere*, to form, shape, or mold), I emphasize the authors' work of shaping the events of the wild girl's life into a coherent, believable narrative. Scientific texts use shaping devices as fictions do and draw on similar epistemological processes of creating meaning (Linnaeus's classificatory table, for example, can easily be read as a Christian origin narrative, aiming to rename—and thus give rebirth to—all God's creatures).[2]

This intentional juxtaposition of texts that are today classified in widely different disciplines is intended to demonstrate the slippery connections between eighteenth-century literary and scientific writing and to reveal the common myths and assumptions informing the categories wild/civilized, criminal/sociable, bestial/human, and female/male in Enlightenment thought. It is the exhibition of monsters, such as the wild girl of Champagne, that helped stake out the nascent disciplinary boundaries (between romance and science, for example) as well as the anthropological differences between man and beast in this historically constructive moment in the human sciences; indeed, Foucault has argued that "the monster provides an account, as though in caricature, of the genesis of differences."[3] But where Foucault limited his analysis (in *The Order of Things*) to the historical formation of "man," I propose to consider the gendering of that new subject and to trace the interrelations between literary and scientific discourse, morality and sensationalism, in the historical formation of a subject called "woman."

Cloaked in animal skins, dirty, inarticulate, and passionately carnivorous, the wild girl of Champagne in her "primitive" state challenged—and threatened—the primacy of a culture that prided itself on rationality and refined, orderly living. As a captive on a provincial estate and later in a convent, the wild girl was often shown to visitors; her repertoire of "wild" habits and tricks was used to shock, surprise, and entertain cultivated observers. Like a carnival attraction, the wild girl belongs to the contemporary "market of curiosities," joining the ranks of the many strange and amazing animals and humans exhibited in European cities during the eighteenth century: the albino Negro who visited Paris in 1743 (and inspired reflections by Voltaire) and the female chimpanzee who charmed London society in 1738, the dwarf Patagonian and 'infibulated' Brazilian, the 'monorchid' Hottentot and the rattlesnake, the chameleons, the crocodiles, and the Surinamese toads.[4]

But the physical and moral proof of her taming made this girl an even more compelling site/sight of speculation for contemporary writers. Like a *monster* of divine origin, a spectacular exhibit of questionable humanity, she warns or *demonstrates* truths of man's place in the world (from the Latin *monstrum*, a divine omen or a marvel, from *monere*, to warn, admonish). Accounts of her life juxtapose

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the wild girl's early state of untamed bestiality to her eventual condition as a fully socialized French woman so as to evoke (and effectively repress) the dark, troubling forces of female strength and sexuality. Perspective necessarily plays a central role in any poetics of monstrosity or exhibit; as we shall see, the wild girl's body parts and corporeal habits are diversely magnified, dissected, and reproduced to re-present her message according to different observers' points of view.[5] Her lost teeth and fingernails, large thumbs, and shifty eyes take on fetishistic value as scientific curios, while her food preferences, table manners, and forceful physicality become metaphors of "wildness," interpreted as a diabolical menace, or a childish *joie de vivre*, or proof of what Franck Tinland calls "degré zéro d'humanité."[6] Her very past becomes a body of literature. My epigraph by Monboddo suggests two narrative means of glossing the wild girl's past cum spectacle: she is read as the hardy heroine of an adventure tale à la Robinson Crusoe or as a successfully civilized wild animal.

Before reading these multifarious interpretations of the wild girl, consider the basic "facts" of her life story ascertained by pulling out the common threads that wind through the *Mercure* articles (1731), Hecquet's *Histoire d'une jeune fille sauvage trouvée dans les bois à l'âge de dix ans* (1755) [*The History of a Wild Girl Found in the Woods at the Age of Ten*], Louis Racine's "Eclaircissement sur la fille sauvage" (c. 1756) ["Clarification on the Wild Girl"], and Franck Tinland's preface to the 1970 reprint of *Histoire d'une jeune fille sauvage*.[7] The wild girl was first sighted one evening in an orchard near the village of Songi, where she was stealing apples from a tree. Her feet were bare and she wore only rags and skins on her small black body, but she was armed with a short club. The villagers set loose upon her a bull dog, which she killed with one blow before scaling the tree and swinging, branch to branch, back into the woods. The village nobleman, M. d'Epinay, ordered that she be caught; a townswoman succeeded by tempting her down from a tree with a pail of water and an eel. Once confined on the d'Epinay estate, the girl (who appeared to be anywhere from ten to eighteen years old, according to different sources) amazed her captors by skinning and eating a rabbit uncooked and devouring a chicken in the same way. After several washings, her skin came white. Her huge thumbs and long, tough fingernails were a source of astonishment, as were her sharp, piercing cries. She escaped several times and surprised the villagers with her unusual flying run, strong swimming, and imperviousness to the cold.

To avoid further escapades, M. d'Epinay, in cooperation with the Bishop of Châlons and the Intendant of Champagne (the provincial governor), placed the wild girl in the municipal Hôpital Général at Châlons, where she was baptized. Called the "shepherd's beast" on the d'Epinay estate, she was henceforth named Marie-Angélique Memmie LeBlanc. Her predilection for tree climbing and swimming, like her fondness for raw frogs and rabbit blood, was immediately discouraged. Forced to eat the institutional fare, she soon lost her teeth, which together with her fingernails were preserved as curiosities. More serious consequences followed: her once robust health, weakened by the cooked diet and sedentary lifestyle at the Hôpital (and later at convents in Châlons and Paris), was permanently damaged. Under the nuns' care, however, Marie-Angélique was gradually "humanized": she learned the French language and Catholic dogma along with needlework and domestic tasks. Once she became fluent enough to answer questions, her interrogators were able to piece together

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part of her past. She had apparently been roaming the Champenois countryside in the company of another savage girl, living off raw fish, frogs, rabbits and roots and taking shelter in trees. They communicated using gestures, grunts, and whistles. After a dispute over a trinket (some claim it was a rosary), Marie-Angélique wounded her companion with her club. She had run off to fend for herself when she was discovered in the apple orchard near Songi.

Thanks to the *Mercure* articles and contemporary interest in anthropological exotica, word of this prodigy quickly spread to the capital and beyond—to England, Scotland, even Sweden.[8] Numerous visitors descended on Châlons to see the marvel: in 1737 the Queen of Poland paid her respects and wrote a letter on behalf of Marie-Angélique to her daughter, the Queen of France. The powerful Duke d'Orléans took Marie-Angélique permanently under his protection in 1744 and brought her to a Parisian convent where she prepared for taking the veil. Although she eventually mastered French, she reportedly abhorred social gatherings and particularly detested being touched. After the death of her benefactor in 1752, Marie-Angélique fell into dire financial straits and was forced to move out of the convent into cheaper quarters. Judging from reports of her increasingly austere, solitary existence in later years, when her solitude was broken only by the infrequent visits of curiosity-seekers (including such luminaries as the poet Louis Racine, the scientist Charles-Marie de La Condamine, her purported biographer Mme Hecquet, and the Scottish philosopher Lord Monboddo), it seems that in leaving the convent Marie-Angélique became at the same time more isolated and more accessible. Although wild children were something of a common occurrence in eighteenth-century Europe (twelve cases are reported between 1661 and 1797), Marie-Angélique was one of the few to elicit widespread curiosity among the cosmopolitan *lettrés* of her time, who were able to see her personally or hear of her through those who had.[9] Yet popular interest seems to have waned rather quickly after her taming was complete, perhaps because her health declined and she was no longer able to "faire la sauvage" for an audience. She is said to have spent the last years of her life sickly and miserable, subsisting on private charity. Some claim that she died at age forty, others at age sixty; the date of her death is uncertain.

The wild girl's metamorphosis from an avid carnivore and unsociable forest dweller into a toothless, meek novitiate intrigued more than one author. But her other, less sensational changes—from inarticulate to French-speaking, from free-willed to docile, from nameless to named—are equally significant, suggesting the various means used to absorb this abnormal child into the norm. Her naming shows how a rhetoric of familiarity (based on Christianity, local legend, and common usage) effectively reduced the girl's threatening difference. The name Marie-Angélique Memmie LeBlanc, with its triple signifiers of female virtue, belies an almost hyperbolic desire to re-place the wild within the confines of the civilized. "Marie" recalls the Christian epitome of womanhood, the Virgin Mary, with her connotations of female sacrifice and humility; "Angélique" denotes a saintly, devout character; and "LeBlanc" (the white) signifies unsullied pureness, as well as ordinary Frenchness (LeBlanc is a common French name). "Memmie" provides the orphan with a paternal heritage, being the name of her godfather (the administrator of the Hôpital Général) as well as that of the patron saint of Châlons, where she was baptised.

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I. CONTEXTS

The girl's physical re-(or rather de-)formation at the hands of her Catholic "humanizers" points to the typical mode of female socialization practiced in eighteenth-century France. Silence, immobility, physical constraint, and social surveillance form the guiding principles in female pedagogy at this time. Reflecting a profound mistrust of children (especially young girls), who are seen either as carriers of original sin or as potential victims, the texts of convent educators prescribe a regimen of the most rigorous material and moral subordination. "Every aspect of school life," writes historian Martine Sonnet, "suggests a molding (*modelage*), whether it is the issue of the hours the girls must spend seated on their benches or their rare opportunities for movement. In all circumstances, the girls must display modesty and decency, their most glorious attributes."[10] Profoundly negative, female education focused on preventing evil rather than on inspiring good; as Sonnet explains, "the regulations of convent schools organize the pedagogical space and time just as they mold the student's body, so that nothing can happen."[11] The body disappears from sight and thought, like a forbidden spectacle of sin, as one convent manual demands: "When they get dressed they will do so in such a manner that no one can see them nude, nor will they look at themselves."[12] Movement is equally restrained by a rhetoric of bodily impropriety: "the students will beware that it is very indecent to lean against the wall or against the back of one's chair, . . . to spread out one's arms and legs, to show one's feet, to bite one's nails with one's teeth and other similar things."[13] Hence when contemporary observers celebrate the wild girl's "progress," what they are commemorating is the achievement of a quiet, controlled, still body and an uneventful, moral (yet guilt-ridden) existence.

This pedagogical practice of immobilizing the body and narrowing the thoughts, so common in female education of the time, seems to have been enforced to a different degree in the education of boys. Certainly, discipline and punishment are central to the program, but some physical exercise and intellectual curiosity is encouraged. Indeed, one is tempted to speculate on the relations between conventions of gendered roles and education in the eighteenth century and the experience of wild children. Whereas Marie-Angélique was confined to a series of convents, urged to convert and spend her life in penitence for her one-time savagery, it seems that the wild boys encountered a rather different re-education process. After his capture in 1724, Peter of Hanover was entrusted to a well-known scientific theorist and London socialite, Dr. John Arbuthnot, fellow of the Royal Society, "Physician to the Queen," friend of Pope and Swift. In spite of Dr. Arbuthnot's efforts, Peter's educational achievements were largely limited to speaking a few words, polite bodily comportment, and table manners; yet he is said to have passed his later years (he died a septuagenarian) happily enough on a farm in the Hertfordshire, living and eating with the farmers, imbibing alcohol, retaining but one trait of his previous state: an ability to forecast the weather. The celebrated Victor of Aveyron (captured in 1798), the only other wild child whose experience is recorded in detail, received a rigorously scientific education (informed by Condillac's sensualist philosophy) by the famous and esteemed Dr. Jean Itard, Director of the Institution Impériale des Sourds-Muets. Itard devoted a considerable amount of his time (six years) to developing the child's speech and intelligence,

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without attaining much progress (Victor remained mute but did learn to write and act sociably in company). When Victor turned eighteen, the government awarded a pension of 150 francs to his kindly housekeeper, Mme Guérin, for her care and attention of the wild boy, and Itard passed guardianship to her. Victor is said to have spent the rest of his life happily enough in obscurity until his death at age forty.

Given the notoriety of Marie-Angélique's discovery and capture, and her evident intellectual abilities, it is surprising that she did not enjoy the same kind of attention as the males. Although La Condamine and Monboddo did visit her, she spent her whole life sequestered in convents, except for the last years she spent alone.[14] Could it be that a feral girl was considered unfit, improper for scientific experimentation (or intellectual cultivation) because of her sex? As Londa Schiebinger has noted in the treatment of female apes—another group of "sub-humans"—in contemporary literature, "No one *denied* that female apes were capable of such accomplishments; the question did not arise. Europeans simply assumed that active, cultured individuals were male. . . . The question of the humanity and rights of apes was intimately tied to the question of rights for women."[15] We shall see that the conceptual leap from ape to feral human was not wide; in fact, the destinies of these two figures become intertwined in contemporary iconography. In literature as in life, the wild girl appears to be a fairly passive nonentity after taming. Once the account of her precapture past and exhibitions of her vestigial wildness are related, authors generally conclude with a note on her "success" as a civilized woman: in other words, her obedience, bodily control, and religious devotion.

II. TEXTS

The first accounts of the wild girl's sighting appeared in the popular Parisian newspaper, *Le Mercure de France*, in December 1731, entitled "Lettre écrite de Châlons, en Champagne, le 9 décembre 1731, par M. A M. N... au sujet de la Fille sauvage, trouvée aux environs de cette ville" and "Extrait d'une autre lettre sur le même sujet." The wild girl's apparent exoticism clearly captured these writers' imaginations. Before relating any details of her capture, M. A M. N... refutes one theory of her exotic origins and launches immediately into another:

> she is not from Norway (as some have said), we believe rather that she was born in the Antilles Islands of America, which belong to the French, such as Guadeloupe, Martinique, St. Christopher, St. Domingue, etc. because [when] a gentleman from Châlons, who had been to Guadeloupe, showed her a cassave or manioc [root] which is a bread eaten by the savages of the Antilles, she cried for joy, and taking a morsel, she ate it with great appetite.[16]

Significantly, the proof of her Antillaise identity comes from a food preference. Food and eating act as metaphorical barometers of civilization and savagery in much contemporary ethnography and fiction (with the cannibal, who feeds on his own kind, inhabiting the lowest degree of humanity). The author's identification of the wild girl with the French Antilles, France's most beloved and lucrative colonial possession, is a way of naturalizing her as a French speaker and a colonial subject, member of a conquered, compliant people.

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The question of the wild girl's original language, arising in a time when theories of universal languages, linguistic geneaologies, and the possibilities of animal speech occupied Europe's leading savants, gave rise to detailed explanations in the *Mercure* as well.[17] Because he conceived of Marie-Angélique as an exotic foreigner, M. A M. N... interprets her primitive attempts to communicate as traces of her indigenous tongue: "she calls a net 'debily,' in the patois of her country; to say 'hello girl' ['bonjour fille'] one says, according to her, 'Yas yas fioul,' adding that when one called her one said 'Riam riam fioul': this is what makes us realize that she is beginning to understand the meaning of French terms, interpreting them with terms of her own land."[18] By valorizing her "babbling," this sympathetic witness suggests that the girl's strangeness results from cultural, not physical difference, and gives evidence of her aptitude for socialization.

But the line between the human and the animal breaks down repeatedly in these narratives. Indeed, what strikes us most in the *Mercure* letters is the desire to capitalize on the semibestial aspect of the wild girl's appearance and to underscore her value as a cultural phenomenon or spectacle, a kind of exotic, ill-behaved zoo specimen. Both accounts spotlight her physical eccentricities—her abhorrence of being touched, her swift run, shifty eyes, and ability to hunt and fish with her bare hands—as visual proof of her wildness, performed on demand. The surprise and shock felt by "civilized" observers while witnessing Marie-Angélique's "savage" habits, especially her food preferences and table manners, emerge vividly and form a leitmotif in these and other "wild girl" stories. Hence M. A M. N... notes: "We noticed that everything she ate, she ate raw. . . . As for water, her ordinary drink, she drinks it from a pail, lapping it up like a cow, on all fours,"[19] and the second *Mercure* letter relates the amazement and disgust felt by observers watching her perform her savage tricks: "We saw that day, with a feeling of horror, the girl eat more than a pound and a half of raw beef, without chewing it a bit, and then saw her pounce with a kind of fury on a hare that one put before her, which she skinned in a wink with the facility that comes of habit, and then devoured in an instant without removing the entrails."[20]

In both *Mercure* letters, the girl's attraction—and value as a news item—lies in her potential to shock, to disturb the norms of female physicality and polite behavior in a society that prided itself for cleanliness and refined manners.[21] Her oft-cited penchant for meat in itself constituted a threat to reigning views of proper female conduct. For Jean-Jacques Rousseau, among others, food had moral equivalents: dairy products (associated with motherhood and fecundity) were prescribed for girls and women, but meat products (perhaps because of their bestial origins and association with carnage and butchering) were felt to embody the worst traits of masculinity: violence and cruelty.[22] The wild girl's preference for raw meat over cooked violated an even more ingrained food taboo: tantamount to violating the boundaries between human and animal, such transgressions threatened to rip asunder the social order and reveal man's basest instincts. As Claude Lévi-Strauss writes, "Between the social person and his or her own body, in which nature is unleashed, between the body and the biological and physical universe," food taboos and table and toilet etiquette, "moderate our exchanges with the external world, and superimpose on them a domesticated, more peaceful and more sober rhythm."[23] For the self-con-

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sciously refined, *propre* (or at least elegant) readers of the *Mercure*, Marie-Angélique's alimentary transgression into the wild was at once repulsive and titillating, amusing if kept under control.[24]

Given its importance in both *Mercure* letters, this juxtaposition of untamed bestiality and socialized femininity seems to have been precisely what so intrigued contemporary audiences in the wild girl's story. As proof of the powerful, latent urges hiding in man, her bizarre eating habits thrilled readers at the same time that her successful re-education as a demure French woman demonstrated the triumph of order over chaos, that is, the power of a well-run institution to reform and humanize a savage. As Foucault and historians of the Annales school have shown, the eighteenth century saw the establishment of unprecedented numbers of civic facilities designed to contain society's outcasts and remove them from the public eye.[25] The insane asylums, prisons, schools, and foundling homes built during this time were a source of no little civic pride and popular interest. M. A M. N... describes Châlons' municipal Hôpital Général, in typically appreciative terms, as the key to Marie-Angélique's survival in French society, touting the institution's multiple functions as a charity home, a vocational school, and a place of moral redemption:

> the Bishop [of Châlons] has since taken care to have her placed in the Hôpital Général of that city, where the poor children are sheltered and fed until the age of fifteen or sixteen, when they are taught a trade. It is there that one tries to humanize her completely and to educate her. . . . The Superior of the Hôpital says that she knows how to embroider very well . . . they teach her Christian religion as well, she says she wants to be baptised in the 'Terrestrial Paradise,' the term she uses for our churches.[26]

Redemption forms the central theme of the Jansenist Louis Racine's "Epître II sur l'homme" (1747) ["Epistle II on Man"], an impassioned lament of the violence and vices that plague the human condition. Racine brings up the wild girl in an early strophe on primitive man, the distant ancestor of contemporary Europeans, identifying her as "this surprising girl, a sad example of what we would be without education and society."[27] His portrait of Marie-Angélique capitalizes on her violent past, her lack of language, her bestial—almost cannibalistic—eating habits, and her rumored murder of her companion so as to reinforce a Hobbesian conception of natural man as a vicious and immoral creature lost without society's disciplinary structure:

> And what were then our savage forefathers,
> A girl in our day reveals to the eye,
> It was not words her mouth articulated:
> Only one sound came out, a piercing, wild cry.
> With living animals that she ripped apart by hand,
> Palpitating morsels assuaged her hunger.
> From early childhood she wandered from mountain to mountain,
> And sullied the deserts with the blood of her companion.
> Why did she immolate her [companion] to her rage?
> What desire was so great that it separated two hearts
> United by the forest, their ages and misery?
> Let us admit those were the ways of our forefathers.[28]

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Reading the wild girl's uncivilized past as a moral flaw, a vestige of original sin, Racine suggests that her savagery can be remedied only by religious instruction and rigorous discipline, if not punishment. For only through punitive measures and repressive tactics can man's natural propensity for violence be controlled and society maintained, as the poet affirms: "Chains, prisons, gallows and tortures, / Such were the foundations of society."[29]

Like the *Mercure* letters, Racine's epistle and his "Eclaircissement sur la fille sauvage" (c. 1756) ["Clarification on the Wild Girl"] reveal an obvious fascination with the girl's animality. Racine thus describes her spiritual struggle as a recent convert through analogy with her physical torment as a rehabilitated carnivore, paralleling the believer's battle against doubt with the civilized savage's conflict between instinctual desires and societal obligations. Savagery translates as wickedness for Racine: the girl's notorious fondness for animal blood is no mere infraction of human law, but a violation of God's own commandments, as he writes: "The blood of animals, so forbidden to man ever since the flood, was her nectar."[30] Like a repentant sinner who is sorely tempted by the pleasures of the flesh, the wild girl lives in constant threat of relapse, her thirst for blood making a parody of the eucharist:

> the most violent of her temptations was to drink the blood of a living animal. She herself confessed to me that when she saw a child, she was tormented by this desire. When she told me that, my daughter, who was still small, was with me; [Marie-Angélique] noticed the emotion on [my daughter's] face at the confession of such a temptation and, laughing, she told her, "Do not worry about a thing, Mademoiselle, God has changed me very much."[31]

This sense of foreboding, the warning of an imminent or barely avoided relapse into wildness, haunts the girl's character even in the biographical note to the "Epître," where Racine remarks, "After all the pains one has taken to soften her ferocity, she conserves some vestiges in her eyes and her manners: she doesn't like our food or society, she only stays out of obedience to God. The religion she has been taught prevents her, she says, from returning to the woods."[32] Exaggerating her moral ambivalence and cannibalistic tastes, Racine rewrites the wild girl as a monstrous example of the tortured sinner seeking redemption and translates her extraordinary *péripéties* into a didactic cautionary tale on the misery of man without God and the hard work that salvation requires.

LeBlanc's purported biography, *Histoire d'une jeune fille sauvage trouvée dans les bois à l'âge de dix ans*, seems expressly designed to elicit a sympathetic response in the reader.[33] Indeed La Condamine and Lord Monboddo both claim that the *Histoire d'une jeune fille sauvage* was published in order to promote public interest in the wild girl and to allow her to earn some money from the book's profits, with Monboddo going so far as to offer her address to the curious![34] The very circumstances of publication perform a publicity function: attributed to a certain Mme H...t on the title page, and afterward to the scientist La Condamine, this text's origins pique the reader's curiosity. La Condamine sets the stage when, publicly refuting authorship of the *Histoire d'une jeune fille sauvage* in a letter to a M. de Boissy of the Académie française, strategically inserted in the *Mercure de France* soon after the

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appearance of the book (April 1755), he evokes a fiction of female community and authorship between the wild girl and a lady known only as Mme Hecquet, "a widow, who lives near St. Marceau and, having met and befriended the girl after the death of M. the Duke d'Orléans who was protecting her, took the pains to write her story."[35]

As if to reinforce this image of a female community between the author/benefactor and the subject/victim, the author of the *Histoire d'une jeune fille sauvage* deploys textual strategies reminiscent of another well-known woman-authored text, Mme de Graffigny's best-selling novel, *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* (1747, "definitive" edition 1752). Like the *Histoire d'une jeune fille sauvage*, Graffigny's fiction relies on the premise that an unnamed female "editor" has come into contact with a beleaguered woman from the New World and has agreed to relay this foreigner's story to her contemporaries to alert them to the injustices of European schemes for "civilizing" or colonizing savages. Both texts use ethnographic data (foreign terms and details of dress, hygiene, and social rituals) to render the fiction more plausible and give it the veneer of a scientific document.[36] Where Graffigny used sources on the Incas' magnificent empire to naturalize the mores of her primitive heroine, Hecquet tries to make the habits and actions of the wild girl more comprehensible to French readers by labeling her an Eskimo—a race popularly known as the "eaters of raw meat," notorious for their cannibalism, hostility to Europeans, and disgusting personal habits.[37] These contradictory images of the wild girl in *Histoire d'une jeune fille sauvage*—the needy human being versus the savage Eskimo—grow out of the two representational strategies informing Hecquet's (and Graffigny's) narratives. Stressing the wild girl's human qualities—her suffering and vulnerability—allows the author to criticize indirectly the French and the supposed superiority of "civilized" over "primitive"; emphasizing the girl's primitive past and remarkable travels allows the author to reinscribe her tale as an exotic romance, a genre well-known and loved by eighteenth-century audiences. As I recently argued in *Exotic Women*, tales of exotic and savage women in eighteenth-century France give a colorful cast and distinct ideological accent to scenarios of gendered dominance and resistance. One might read the *Histoire d'une jeune fille sauvage*'s literary premise—the penitent wild girl/sinner tells her story to a benevolent widow, who publishes it as a document of public interest under the aegis of a noted male scientist—as a mirror of the powerful paternal authority and religious forces that initially caught the wild girl and had her "tamed" for French society in the first place.

L'Histoire d'une jeune fille sauvage begins with a sensationalized image of the wild girl revealing connections to medieval tradition—of the uncouth, strong, and threatening forest dweller who inhabits the edges of the civilized world. After seeing the dirty, disheveled girl in an apple tree, the villagers, according to Hecquet, cried out, "There is the devil," locked themselves in their homes, and set upon her a bull dog with a spike collar. The description of her ensuing conduct embodies the supernatural strength and vicious glee of a medieval wild man, as the *Histoire d'une jeune fille sauvage* announces: "The little savage perceiving him [the mastiff] advancing furiously toward her, kept her ground without flinching, grasping her little club with both hands. . . . Perceiving the dog within her reach, she struck him so violently on his head as laid him breathless at her feet. Elated with her victory, she jumped several times over the dead carcass of the dog."[38] Her skillful handling of the club is

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FIGURE 1. "Recontre d'une femme sauvage" ("Encounter with a Savage Woman"), fom Jean-Claude Gorjy, *Victorine* (Paris: Guillot, 1789). From the Princeton University Libraries Collection.

significant. According to Richard Bernheimer, one could always identify a wild man by certain totemic signs: his furry body, bare feet, and the heavy club or tree trunk that he carried.[39]

Figure 1, entitled "Recontre d'une femme sauvage" ["Encounter With a Savage Woman"], from Jean-Claude Gorjy's novel *Victorine* (1789), continues this tradition in the feminine gender, showing a wild-looking woman standing in an orchard and brandishing a long stick to keep a frightened group of peasants at bay. The scene's similarity to the description of Marie-Angélique's discovery is striking—both women are dressed in rags and caught by peasants while stealing fruit, both wield a stick or club in defense—and suggests that Gorjy (and his illustrator) were familiar with accounts of the wild girl of Champagne. When the heroine Victorine arrives upon this tense scene, she claims to draw on knowledge of "novels which speak of savages" to assess the situation, and then announces, "'It's a savage!' I say to

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myself and then, remembering my readings, I ask the crowd to step back, I take a branch, I go toward the stranger. . . . I was not mistaken. She drops her weapon, runs to me, takes the branch, holds it with me."[40]

Once captured, however, the heroine of the *Histoire d'une jeune fille sauvage* becomes less threatening; her "wild" conduct looks more like the harmless antics of an unfortunate, undisciplined, yet good-hearted, child. Instead of describing her as a phenomenon worthy of scientific investigation or as a warning about godlessness, the author cites the girl's youth, suffering, and lack of education as causing her "uncivilized" appearance. Of the wild girl's early attempts to speak French, Hecquet writes that "her voice, though weak, was sharp, shrill, and piercing; and her words were short and confused, like those of a child, at a loss for terms to express its meaning" (21). This author relates her "uncivilized" acts, like throwing live frogs on the plates of M. d'Epinay's dinner guests, with indulgent good humor: "The little savage, quite amazed at the small value they seem'd to set on her delicate fare, carefully gathered up the scattered frogs, and threw them back again on the plates and table" (43).

Echoing Rousseau's pessimistic appraisal of society's power to perfect mankind in the *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité* (published the same year as the *Histoire d'une jeune fille sauvage*),[41] Hecquet emphasizes the pathos of Marie-Angélique's taming and embellishes her narrative with explanations aiming to garner the reader's sympathy. Instead of describing the girl's former physical exploits with shock or disgust, the author sadly remarks the girl's reduced capacity at present: "I myself have seen some instances of the ease and swiftness with which she ran, than which nothing could be more amazing; and yet what I saw was but the remains of her former agility, which long sickness, and the want of practice for many years, have very much impaired" (19). The girl's body suffers from the slow coercion toward civilization. Forced to forgo her customary regimen of "raw bloody flesh, and the leaves, branches and roots of trees," for a "civilized" diet of cooked meats, bread, salt and wine, she soon lost her teeth and contracted health problems that proved incurable by civilized methods. "From one dangerous disorder, she immediately fell into another. . . . These pains frequently produced an universal spasm over her whole body, and weaknesses irreparable by all the arts of cookery" (44–45). The wild body remains a compelling object of the reader's gaze, but now the visual interest derives from the display of violent suffering and uncontrollable illness, a tragic spectacle of human frailty. The sickly woman's longing for animal blood is thus recast as an understandable desire for a proven cure, which, the girl claimed, "penetrated every part of her body, softened the acrimony of her throat, and brought back her strength" (48). Moreover, Hecquet asserts that the girl was finally so completely humanized (and physically broken) that when the author interviewed her, twenty years after her capture, she abhorred raw flesh.

Once she began to digest the dogma taught by her Catholic "tamers," the girl discovered new moral sensations as well: shame and self-loathing. The tableau depicted in *Histoire d'une jeune fille sauvage* of LeBlanc's desperate situation after the death of the Duke d'Orléans underlines her vulnerability in an uncaring,

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profit-oriented society: "LeBlanc found herself in a manner totally neglected. I shall leave the reader to imagine the melancholy reflections of this unhappy girl, on being, by the death of her noble patron, left weak and languishing, without either relation or friend to take care of her among these religious [sisters], who, by that event, saw all their [financial] expectations blasted" (57).

Yet when the author asked how she planned to survive in the big city with neither financial nor medical aid, Marie-Angélique reportedly replied, "For what purpose . . . has God brought me from among wild beasts and made me a Christian? not surely, afterwards to abandon, and suffer me to perish for hunger, that is impossible" (59–60). This profession of faith is ironically undercut by the wild girl's subsequent fate: she was to spend the rest of her life alone in a Parisian garret, sickly, prone to melancholia, and subsisting on a tiny pension. Nevertheless, the author concludes, piously, "The pleasure with which I set down this answer, repays, with usury, the pains I have taken to compose the preceding relation" (60).

But the book does not end here. Instead, the author abruptly changes registers and advertises her tantalizing second half to the reader: "I shall subjoin the conjectures I have already promised about her native country, and the accidents which may have brought her into France, and given occasion to the very singular circumstance of her discovery and capture" (60–61). The tragic present is over, the past adventure begins. The second half of *Histoire d'une jeune fille sauvage* relates the search for the wild girl's lost origins. In spite of the author's claims to the contrary ("here it is by no means our province or intention to compose a romance, or to devise imaginary adventures" [89]), the structure of this part is typical of the voyage literature that enjoyed great popularity in the eighteenth century. Based on interviews conducted partly by gestures, which supposedly brought out vague recollections of the girl's homeland and two maritime voyages, Hecquet reconstructs her life as follows.

Given the girl's propensity to swim in the coldest weather, her white skin, and her taste for raw fish, Hecquet deduces she was born an Eskimo. To explain the girl's familiarity with manioc root, Hecquet imagines Marie-Angélique (and her companion) kidnapped from their native Labrador by a ruthless European trader and taken to the Antilles to be sold. This same ship captain, "either through a frolic, or with a fraudulent intention," painted the girls black, trying to pass them for Africans (92). After crossing the Atlantic on the captain's ship and being given away or sold, the girls escaped, and "perhaps their master or mistress being tired of them, and having despaired of being able to tame them, were very well pleased to get rid of them" (99). As for their route, Hecquet projects an itinerary from "some part of the Zuyder Sea" through the woody country of the lowlands down into the Ardennes whence they arrived in Champagne. "In this manner the adventures of LeBlanc may be easily accounted for," the narrator asserts (97).

All the elements of romance are present in this narrative: kidnapping, disguise, perilous voyages, encounter with exotic peoples, and closure. The romance plot is an adroit device for sensationalism and containment, for it captures the interest through marvelous *péripéties*, only to order everything at the end. Once la-

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beled an Eskimo, the wild girl's strangeness dissipates and her assimilation takes on greater value. But the generic indeterminacy of this work leaves many questions unanswered. The many authorial asides, with their claims of veracity and eyewitness evidence, remind one of the text's historical moment (formulas for simulating "truth" value were legion in the eighteenth-century novel) and paradoxically reinforce the fictional resonance of the *Histoire d'une jeune fille sauvage*. Is this a novel, or a travel tale? Or is it a public service? The narrative ends with a call for help in solving this mystery: "Perhaps it may not be too late still; and the publication of this relation may procure new light in this very curious and dark affair; which is one of the chief motives that have made me compose it" (101–2). By the end of the biography, one's sense of the author's desire to help LeBlanc has changed. The protective observer/biographer becomes a novelist/detective, hot on the trail of a tantalizing mystery.

But for all its problems of generic impurity and *invraisemblance*, this work is remarkable in its unquestioning acceptance of the girl's *human* status. In the *Histoire d'une jeune fille sauvage*, LeBlanc's savagery comes across as the documented, appropriate foreign customs of a people notoriously resistant (and vulnerable) to captivity. The girl's physical and mental decline in the hands of her captors is crucial to the author's suggestion that this re-education may have been yet another arbitrary act of noble prerogative and forced female socialization rather than the necessary "taming" of a wild beast. Denouncing the fickleness of noble patronage and the financially motivated Catholic sisters assigned to care for the wild girl, the author caustically remarks, "That Prince has undoubtedly received the reward of his charity in the other world; but in this [one] the unhappy LeBlanc received very little advantage from his good intentions" (56–57).

Such moral considerations remain conspicuously absent from "scientific" narratives of the wild girl until much later in the eighteenth century. Carl Linnaeus was the first to describe Marie-Angélique's physical and social abnormalities with the scientific terminology of natural history; he classified her in a taxonomy of human types. In the twelfth edition of his classic *Systema naturae* (1766), Linnaeus breaks down the genus *Homo* into two sub-genera: *Homo nocturnus* and *Homo diurnus*. *Homo nocturnus*, otherwise known as the "Troglodyte," refers to the chimpanzees, orangutans, and other anthropoid creatures reportedly sighted by early explorers in Africa and Asia, such as those fantastic creatures represented in Figure 2, which I will discuss below.[42] The other genus of man, *Homo diurnus*, comprises three species: the normative *Homo sapiens*, distinguished by its characteristic skin, temperament, and location as European, American, Asian, or African, followed by the inferior *Homo monstrosus* and *Homo ferus*. *Homo monstrosus* embraces a number of hotly debated human anomalies, such as the Patagonian giant, the dwarf of the Alps, and the monorchid Hottentot. *Homo ferus*, or "feral man," on the other hand, covers a number of unfortunate individuals whose existence was well documented. Distinguished by bestial traits such as muteness, quadruped locomotion, and hairiness, the *Homines feri* listed by Linnaeus include the wolf-boy of Hesse (*Juvenis lupinus hessensis*), Peter of Hanover (*Juvenis hannoveranus*), and the wild girl of Champagne (*Puella campanica*). As befits the pared-down, technical style of this work, designed to demonstrate Linnaeus's innovative system of binominal nomenclature, these children are known only by artificial Latin names, with no mention of their peculiar

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histories or individual destinies (aside from indicators of sex and place of origin). After all, the function of a taxonomy (what Foucault calls a "disciplinary space of natural beings") is to characterize (and thus reduce individual singularities) and constitute classes.[43] Details would clutter the table.

The history of the wild girl's inclusion in the *Systema naturae* is interesting in itself as a reflection on the uncertain authority of eighteenth-century scientific discourse. Although Linnaeus's work achieved lasting fame (some claim it is Sweden's greatest scientific achievement to date) and was one of the most widely cited sources on natural history in eighteenth-century Europe, the author's views are not always consistent. The first edition (1735), published when Linnaeus was twenty-eight, comprises only ten or so folio pages. In it, the young naturalist announces his mission to rid science of legend and superstitions by demystifying the species *Paradoxa* or monsters. For each of the extraordinary creatures on this list, including the Hydra, the Satyr, the Frog-Fish, and the Phoenix, Linnaeus gives a new Latin name and a simple scientific explanation. For example, the tailed Satyr, he explains, that creature who is "hairy, bearded, with a manlike body, gesticulating much, very fallacious, is a species of monkey, if ever one has been seen."[44] This first edition creates the genus "Anthropomorpha" as a catch-all category for human and human-seeming creatures, including *Homo* (man, described as European, American, Asiatic, African), *Simia* (apes, including the "Satyrus"), and *Bradypus* (sloths). Twenty years later in the tenth edition (1758), when, as Linnaeus's biographer Knut Hagberg writes, "the book had swollen to a vast catalogue of all the plant and animal species known to Linnaeus," we find much that is new, such as the terms *Mammalia*, *Primates*, and *Homo sapiens*, and additional human species.[45] *Homo nocturnus* or "Troglodyte" (a kind of ape) now accompanies *Homo diurnus* (that is, *Homo sapiens*, *Homo monstrosus,* and *Homo ferus*), and six examples of "feral man" or wild children are given. The list of feral children grows to nine in the twelfth edition (1766), this time including the wild girl of Champagne or *Puella campanica*. But in the thirteenth edition (1788), the individual cases of *Homines feri* disappear, leaving only the generic classification and its normative description: "four-footed, mute, hairy." Clearly, the naturalist was working through his classifications over time, adding and correcting them as his ideas changed and information grew.

The question of why Linnaeus made such radical changes in what was fast becoming the Bible of natural history remains unresolved. We know the naturalist was very much aware of the exhibits of "savages" and exotic animals then circulating in European capitals. In 1758 he carried on an active correspondence with a pupil visiting London, urging him with great vehemence to examine a young albino girl then being exhibited and to determine whether, as seemed likely, she fit Linnaeus's category *Troglodyte*. Linnaeus considered the matter so important that he instructed the pupil to offer any price if the owner were willing to sell his treasure.[46] Given his avid desire for physical specimens, that is, empirical proof for his theories, it is puzzling that Linnaeus took such liberties in his categorization of "Anthropomorpha." Although his biographer writes off the uncertainties of the *Systema naturae* by evoking the great botanist's "outstanding lack of dogmatism" (that is, his willingness to correct his own work), historians of science tend to cite Linnaeus's credibility and adherence to folklore as causing these embarrassing departures from "science."[47] Sur-

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veying the new members of the human genus in the tenth edition of *Systema naturae*, Gunnar Broberg explains, "It is a motley collection, and one realizes that Linnaeus had allowed himself to be led astray. New myths were formed from the remnants of old ones, ancient traditions were mixed with more recent reports."[48]

Indeed, Linnaeus's choice of Latin names belies a tendency, like that of Classical authors, to confuse fantastic creatures of fable (satyr, troglodyte, lucifer) with various kinds of simians by the same names. His choice of illustrations shows another vestige of an earlier (some might even say medieval) conception of zoological exactitude. Drawing on sources of dubious factuality, such as Conrad Gesner's *Historia animalium* (1551) and Jacob Bontius's *Historia naturalis* (1658), contemporary travel accounts, hearsay, and newspaper articles, the great scientist and educator unwittingly created a science tinged with fiction, especially as regards the distinctions between apes and man. The monstrous creatures in the *Systema naturae* stake out ambiguous frontiers between myth, legend, and scientific knowledge. And this in spite of the author's insistence on clear sight and accurate descriptions. As the first edition declares: "He may call himself a naturalist (a natural historian), who well distinguishes the parts of natural bodies by sight and describes and names all these rightly in agreement with the threefold division."[49]

That this naturalist did not always demand scientifically accurate illustrations is obvious in Figure 2, which shows four great apes from his dissertation on the "Anthropomorpha."[50] The apes include, on the far left (or top), a *Homo troglodytus* taken from Bontius's illustration of an orangutan, but this one is even more feminized. The truth value of this image had already come under fire: the anatomist Tyson wrote, "I confess I do mistrust the whole *Representation*."[51] The third ape, *Satyrus*, represents the female chimpanzee brought from Angola to England reported in the 1738 *London Magazine* and immortalized by Scotin's illustration (Figure 3), in which she is raising a tea cup to her lips (and discreetly covering her breast) to exhibit the refined table manners and modesty that so charmed London society.[52] Although hairier, the "Anthropomorpha" version duplicates the Scotin original except for one significant alteration: the teacup is gone! The left hand here draws attention to the chimp's bare breast—either an engraver's omission or, Schiebinger speculates, a symbol of Linnaeus's interest in female mammae.[53] Linnaeus's description of the chimpanzee stresses her good manners, noting that she drank daintily, wiping her mouth with her hand, and slept quietly like "a respectful matron."[54] Here the assimilation of exhibition into "scientific" texts, where exhibition is restaged, is interesting. This emphasis on the good manners and chastity of a female primate seems to us akin to the many celebratory accounts of the wild girl's successful transformation into an obedient, mannerly, self-controlled French woman. Significantly, both Linnaeus and Buffon assume the girl was mute and ignorant of language at capture (like an archetypical silent female), whereas we know from other accounts that she had long been communicating with a companion in the woods. These representations bring to light the important moral demands set upon women in early modern Europe and reveal their prevalence even in "scientific" writing.

Referring to himself as the "second Adam," who, by giving true names to God's creatures, would ensure a faithful representation of the natural order,

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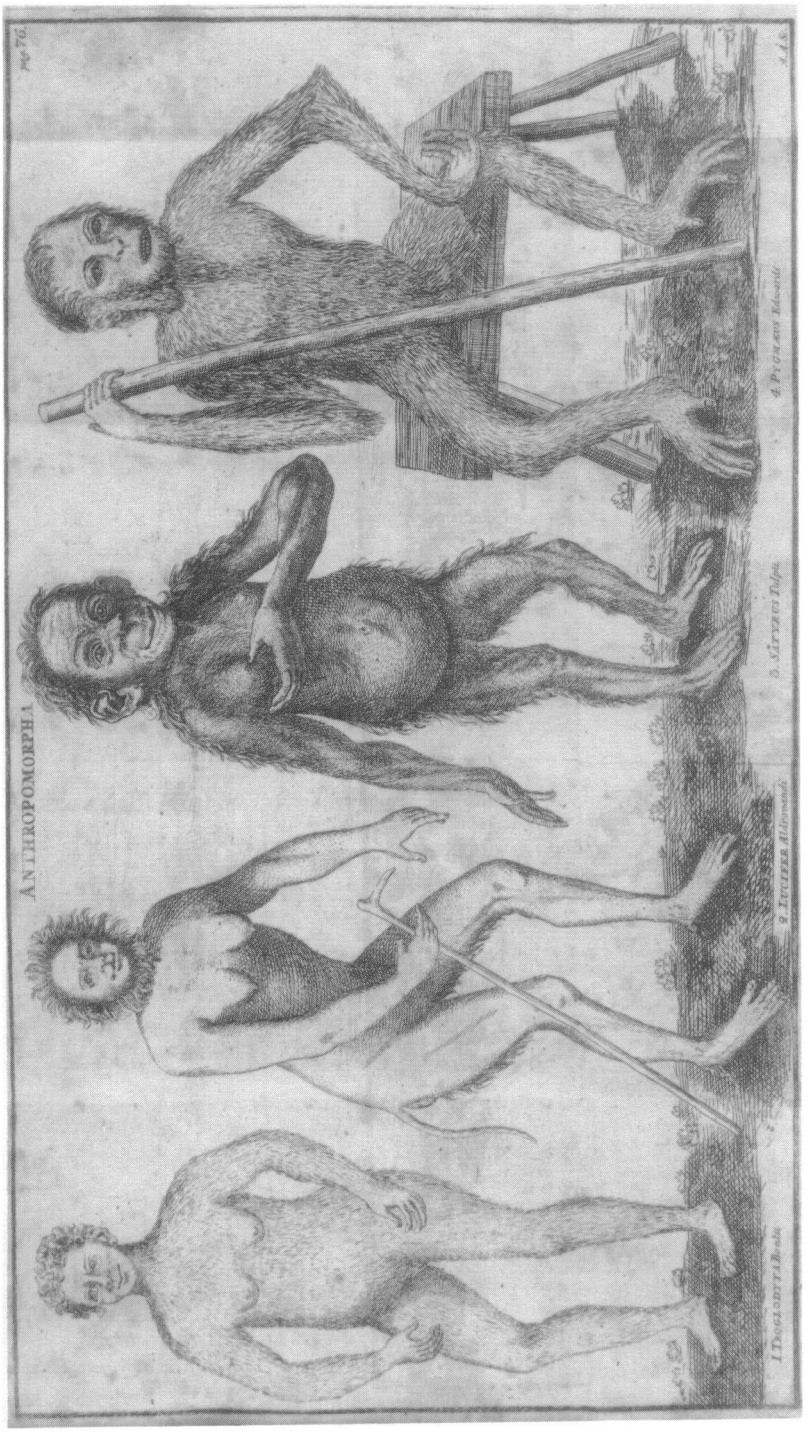

FIGURE 2. *From left to right*: "Troglodyte," "Lucifer," "Satyr," "Pygmee." From Linnaeus, "Anthropomorpha," in *Amoenitates academicae* (Stockholm: Laurentius Salvius, 1763), 6:76. Courtesy of the Department of Special Collections, University Libraries of Notre Dame.

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FIGURE 3. Chimpanzee displayed in London in 1738, from Gerard Scotin, "Animalis rarioris Chimpanzee dicti," *Nova acta erudiorum* (1739).

Linnaeus argued that the task of natural history was to establish a hierarchy of species based on eternal, intrinsic characteristics. He explains the wild girl of Champagne not as an accident of nature, but as a hitherto unrecognized sub-species of humankind. The fixed subdivision *Puella campanica* underlines the static character of Linnaean nomenclature and suggests that no amount of taming or education will ever allow this creature to transcend the company of *Homines feri* and enter the normative class of *Homo europeus*. Linnaeus attached great importance to the notion that species were fixed, unchanged, and unalterable from the moment that God created the universe; as he put it, "If we observe God's works, it becomes more than sufficiently evident to everybody, that each living being is propagated by an egg and that every egg produces an offspring closely resembling the parent. Hence no new species are produced nowadays."[55] The important issue was not that of possible links between species, between man and beast, but rather of correctly naming and classifying all creatures.[56] As Janson argues, early modern naturalists "continued to deal with their material in a frame of mind akin to that of the philologist, emphasizing problems of nomenclature and the authority of the written word rather than comparative anatomy and physiology based on direct observation."[57] Yet the question remains of why the naturalist made a sepa-

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rate genus out of the wild children instead of listing them as variations of *Homo monstrosus*, the miscellaneous group for subhuman types. A likely answer lies in Linneaus's notion that "nature makes no leaps," that all creatures fit together on a great, coherent chain of being. The very existence of the *Homines feri*, the *Homo nocturnus*, and the *Homo monstrosus* proves that the chain of being holds: they fill the gaps below man and above the monkeys and demonstrate the gradations in the hierarchical natural order.

With his students installed in countless European universities, and the Linnaean method being practiced around the globe, Linnaeus had an immense impact on eighteenth-century natural history. Nevertheless, some successors took him to task for devising a system whose criteria allowed for *Homo sapiens* to be grouped alongside subhuman monsters and lesser primates. The prominent French naturalist, the Count de Buffon, for example, rejected Linnaeus's emphasis on visible traits in favor of the invisible human intellect as the foremost proof of man's ascendancy over the animal.[58] In his *Histoire naturelle générale et particulière*, Buffon reiterates the Aristotelian premise that the essence of man resides in his rational mind and not in such "accidental" properties as the form of his body, asserting that "mind, reflection, and language, depend not on the figure nor on the organization of the body. They are endowments peculiar to man," and adding more pointedly, "the orang-outang, though he neither thinks nor speaks, has a body, members, senses, a brain, and a tongue, perfectly similar to those of a man: he counterfeits every human movement; but he performs no action that is characteristic of man."[59] Language as the external sign of human thought is central to this theory. Articulate speech becomes the measure of humanity for Buffon as it was for many of his contemporaries; witness the French prelate, the Cardinal de Polignac, who reportedly dared a chimpanzee at the Jardin du Roi: "Speak, and I will baptise you."[60]

To "form a proper judgment" of the differences between ape and man, Buffon proposes, "a savage man and an ape should be viewed together; for we have no just idea of man in a pure state of nature."[61] This writer's "scientific" judgment, however, proves just as inconclusive and changeable as Linnaeus's, for in another volume of the same text he suggests that philosophers could know the state of nature if they took the time to observe "an absolute savage" ["un sauvage absolument sauvage"] such as one of the wild children found in Europe.[62]And in another volume, Buffon forgets his doubts and asserts: "Thus the state of pure nature is a known state."[63] Whereas in his earlier argument Buffon associates natural man with the savage Hottentot (and then rejects the comparison on the grounds of the Hottentots' hideous manners), here natural man connotes the solitary "savage" in Europe. To advance his theory that man is naturally a sociable, language-using animal, Buffon imagines a romantic scenario linking the destinies of Marie-Angélique LeBlanc and Peter of Hanover. This passage, remarkable for its lyricism, Epicurean undercurrents, and Rousseauist philosophy, merits complete citation:

> Thus the state of pure nature is a known state: it is that of the savage living in the desert, but living in a family, knowing his children, and being known by them, using words, and making himself understood. The savage girl picked up in the woods of Champagne, and the man

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> found in the forests of Hanover, are not exceptions to this doctrine. They had lived in absolute solitude; and could not, therefore, have any idea of society, or of the use of words: but if they had ever met, the propensity of Nature would have constrained, and pleasure united them. Attached to each other, they would soon have made themselves understood; they would have first learned the language of love, and then of tenderness for their offspring.[64]

In Buffon's natural history the wild girl incarnates the Rousseauist vision of natural man living alone in the forest, but with a dash of romance. She is a spectacle for philosophical inquiry; her wild body is reinterpreted as the healthy, loving, and sensual body of a "natural woman."

This flair for making scientific theories palatable—if not to say sensational—for the general public can also be found in the writings of the Scottish judge and anthropologist James Burnett, known as Lord Monboddo. Like Buffon, Monboddo bases his speculation on Rousseauist philosophy.[65] And also like his illustrious predecessor, Monboddo's writings (*Antient Metaphysics*, 1779–99, and *Of the Origin and Progress of Language*, 1773–92) attracted a great deal of attention. But whereas Buffon's books established him as an authority, Monboddo's were read mainly with an eye for their more sensational passages—such as the descriptions of the semi-human "insensibles" and "wood eaters" in *Of the Origin and Progress of Language*. And while Buffon was celebrated as a leading naturalist, elected to the Académie des Sciences and appointed Intendant of the Jardin du Roi, Monboddo did not enjoy the esteem of his countrymen; indeed, he was widely considered an eccentric, even a wizard (with a monkey for a familiar), and he suffered the ignominy of being called publicly by Dr. Johnson "a man who talks a great deal about nonsense and doesn't know it!"[66]

Loosely modeled on Rousseau's *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité* (1755), Monboddo's *Of the Origin and Progress of Language* (published anonymously, one volume at a time, over a period of twenty years) posits that humans in the natural state are inarticulate, solitary, nomadic creatures preoccupied by their physical needs. Indolence and lack of opportunity, claims Monboddo, are the sole factors that hinder supposedly inferior species from practicing human speech and enjoying other benefits of civilization: "They [orangutans and solitary savages caught in Europe] want therefore nothing in order to speak, but instruction or example, which the savages who invented the first languages likewise wanted. . . . For, as it is well known, savages are very indolent, at least with respect to any exercise of the mind, and are hardly excited to action by any curiosity, or desire of learning."[67] Language, then, is not an innately human practice or sign of spiritual privilege, but a fundamentally social institution, at once a by-product and founding principle of society.

Eliminating all divine connotations from language practices, Monboddo goes on to declare that even in the natural state humans could communicate, if they would imitate the languages of animals. Monboddo cites the wild girl of Champagne here and claims she told him that "the only music of the people of her country was the imitation of the singing of birds; and she affirmed that she herself could once have imitated the notes of any bird" (1:208). If the girl's pre-captive lifestyle

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resembles Rousseau's theoretical first society (subsistence, nomadism, communication by gesture, cry and song, use of primitive weapons), her taming resembles a journey through evolutionary (social, not physical) time. Although discovered in a "natural" state of brutish egotism, her progressive acquisition of language and socialization bring her from the prehistory of primitive ignorance into the modern world of rational eighteenth-century existence. But the transformation brought losses as well as gains: once she learned to act civilized and speak French, the wild girl lost her ability to imitate birdcalls and her other "wild" talents (1:208).

But for Monboddo, Marie-Angélique's experience is not only fascinating as a glimpse of man's evolution through time; it also provides evidence for his theories on human and primate perfectibility. The wild girl plays a pivotal role in Monboddo's argument: from a symbol of the primitive she becomes a symbol of the fluidity and transformation possible between human and animal. By stressing the parallel between the wild girl's bestial traits and the orangutan's human traits, Monboddo reveals the permeability of the classifications "man" and "beast." To suggest that Marie-Angélique came from a primitive, half-man/half-beast society such as the legendary Ethiopian "wood eaters" (thought to be early ancestors of the orangutan), Monboddo interrupts his description of the "wood eaters" with a note: "The wild girl . . . must have been of a race of people very like this mentioned by Diodorus: For she climbed trees like a squirrel, and leapt from one branch to another, upon all-four, with wonderful agility. . . . And she still retained, when I saw her, a mark of the use of her hands as feet in leaping; for her thumbs were of an unusual breadth" (1:242–43).

Reinforcing the similarities between the wild girl and these forest-dwelling primates, Monboddo continues, "They too went naked, had no arms but sticks, like the Orang-Outangs, who are still to be found on the same continent" (Monboddo, 1:242–43). A singularly anthropomorphic vision of the orangutan follows. Their human form, intelligence, sociability, building skill, and use of sticks as weapons led Monboddo to contend that these apes "may be reckoned to be in the first stage of the human progression, being associated, and practising certain arts of life; but not so far advanced as to have invented the great art of language" (1:269). Later, when taken to task for this radical appraisal of ape intelligence and capabilities, Monboddo retorted, "if I am in error, I have only followed Linnaeus, and I think I have given a better reason than he has done for the Orang-Outang belonging to us, I mean, his use of a stick."[68] The presence of a walking stick is typical in early illustrations of apes, as seen in Figure 2. The stick can be read as evidence of the apes' less-than-human status (as a symbol of the extra help they need to remain erect) or as proof of their proximity to man (as a symbol of their ability to wield weapons—and, by extension, a suggestion of their possible threat to man, as in the iconography of club-wielding medieval wild men).

Like the uncivilized wild girl or the solitary natural man, apes possess latent powers of speech; they simply have not evolved or been brought into exertion by training. For Monboddo, the wild girl represents a successful exercise in socialization, one that might very well be replicated on other so-called subhuman species, as he proclaims: "I am persuaded, it is with wild men, as with wild fruits, which

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we know will not lose their savage nature at the first remove, but can only be tamed by continued culture for a succession of generations" (1:300).

A brief look at some lesser known works of natural history will reveal the further transformations of Marie-Angélique's story in the years preceding the French Revolution. Gaspard Guillard de Beaurieu, in his *Cours d'histoire naturelle* (1770) [*Course on Natural History*], uses a classificatory system that embraces creatures as bizarre and unlikely as those listed in Linnaeus's *Paradoxa*. He classifies "savage man" alongside "merman" ("l'homme marin"), arguing that the two share the indignity of being called "ordinary animals" because they have no speech or perfectibility. Beaurieu's work sounds a note of sympathy for animals and especially of optimism in the value—and power—of (implicitly French) culture to improve the lives of all creatures, writing, "What a conquest, what true glory, if we could succeed in making animals that have hitherto been only brutish and nasty as capable as and better than ourselves![69] But upon arriving at the case of LeBlanc, Beaurieu seems to lose his earlier enthusiasm. Describing her as a living example of a tragic, forced socialization, the author concludes with a nostalgic wish that one had offered her a better life, that of a peasant in the country: "Did she not regret the woods one took her from. . . . When, after emerging from the hands of nature, one sees our manners, our injustices, etc. if one [cannot] go back into the forest, at least one should be able to lead the life of a good and honest peasant."[70] These calls for respect for animals and a return to a simpler, rural life recall the intellectual climate of Beaurieu's day, in the wake of Rousseau's best-selling *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761) and the utopian theories of Morelly, d'Argenson, and Mably, which idealized physical labor and agriculture as the remedy to the moral and economic ills of worldly society.[71] But they also strike a political note, questioning the moral viability of civilizing savages without allowing them any rights as citizens (not even the "natural right" of choosing one's own abode) and criticizing the injustices inherent in French society.

A vigorously anti-speculative, empirical discourse emerges in the work of Buffon's successors in the late eighteenth century, and the wild girl is transformed from an exemplar of nature into a "pathological" case. Eberhard von Zimmermann's *Zoologie géographique* (1777, 1784) [*Geographical Zoology*], cites Buffon as his source of information about humanity's natural state, and advances the time-worn theory that man's faculty of speech marks his superiority over beast. What is interesting in von Zimmermann, however, is his use of a rhetoric of *disease* to describe the wild girl. Denouncing the unscientific theories of earlier natural historians, von Zimmermann writes: "Let no one cite the young savage from Hanover, the girl of the forest from Songi or other individuals who have been abandoned. They lived in isolation, and their example . . . teaches us absolutely nothing about man's natural state, since they were never in it. That would be like studying physiology through the observation of a man attacked by the most violent of diseases."[72] As the positivist spirit gradually begins to assert itself, the scientist's appraisal of LeBlanc's wildness reads sickness where people once saw nature and diagnoses a pathological case of isolation where people earlier imagined exotic origins, picaresque adventures, and simian similarities.

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By tracing, as we have done, the history and fictions of the wild girl of Champagne through the century, we can perceive an epistemological shift in the concepts of wild/civilized, criminal/sociable, and bestial/human. As the Revolution approaches, the notion of a "child of nature" falls out of favor among scientists. Observers (like the celebrated psychologist Dr. Pinel, who examined Victor of Aveyron) conclude that such children are imbeciles rather than examples of natural man. A nineteenth-century observer, Bory de Saint-Vincent, puts the status of wild children in no uncertain terms in the *Dictionnaire classique d'histoire naturelle* (1822–31) [*Classic Dictionary of Natural History*]: "The discovery (of these savages) first causes a great rumor in the gazettes, [but] they finish by dying forgotten in some insane asylum. The observation of this kind of cripple cannot shed the slightest light on the primitive state of our species; it is not by those exceptions that one must study man."[73]

It is also significant that the wild girl does not appear in the works of the great naturalists and anthropologists Cuvier, Camper, or Geoffroy de Saint-Hilaire. Rather, one sees a growing number of studies on apes, primates, and non-white peoples. The late eighteenth century gave rise to a move away from philosophical argumentation and speculative evidence to scientific data (skull sizes, brain weights, facial angles); the empirical method won out over the deductive as the age of positivism dawned. Furthermore, as Franck Tinland has argued, this new age that was to be the golden age of colonialism also ushered in a new tone, resonant with racist accents, of intolerance and disgust.[74] Whereas the Enlightenment scientist affected a certain (if mitigated) sympathy for supposedly sub-human types, works of nineteenth-century scientists often reveal an attitude of repugnance. When Cuvier describes the so-called 'Hottentot Venus' displayed in Paris in 1807 (and dissected in 1815), he exploits her spectacular physique to underline the repulsion he shares with the reader: "Everyone could see her during her eighteen-month-long sojourn in our capital and verify the enormous protuberance of her buttocks, and the brutal appearance of her face," adding, "The most repulsive thing about our Bushman was her physiognomy."[75] With increasing tension over the slave trade, anthropology (or rather comparative anatomy) became a powerful tool in resolving such thorny issues as the superiority of whites over blacks with hard data (measurements and comparisons). Science was used to redefine and guard the boundaries of "civilized" humanity from the encroaching presence of inferior outsiders.

In the course of our readings we have witnessed the many rhetorical devices and narrative strategies used to "capture" the wild girl of Champagne. Our trajectory from the *Mercure* to von Zimmermann and the early nineteenth-century positivists shows how rational Enlightenment thought was beset by conflicting influences and ambitions. Seeking to realize the triumph of reason over superstition and the supernatural, scientists demystified the fantastic creatures of the past—and yet used names from Greco-Roman mythology to designate newly discovered primates. Looking for authoritative, documentary proof of the wild girl's foreign identity, they borrowed legends recounted in voyage literature and invented fictions rivalling the most extravagant novels of the day. Paradoxically, it seems that contemporary discoveries in anthropology and primatology may have actually made the distinction between the "wild man" and the ape even more ambiguous. As Janson points out, eigh-

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teenth-century thinkers were so shocked by travellers' accounts of such degenerate peoples as the Hottentots and the Eskimos, who failed to meet even the minimum standards of humanity, that they found it difficult to distinguish them from the orangutan, whose physical and mental resemblance to man was thought to far surpass the limits of a mere animal.[76]

But we must not assume that this new wave of empiricism put to rest the popular desire for novelties and curios. In fact, it might be argued that the exhibition of anthropological anomalies and exotica reached its apogee in the nineteenth century, when institutional settings were permanently in place to show them. The display of the wild girl in the *Mercure* articles, with their sensational scenes of eating, are part of a geneaology that plays into the ideology of world-as-exhibit. Such journalistic shows gradually become regularized in the new institutional structures (world fairs, exhibit halls), and eventually they are cut off entirely from the real world in museums. Although Marie-Angélique LeBlanc faded from the French collective memory,[77] other equally repulsive/tantalizing objects filled up the ongoing "market of curiosities," like the Hottentot Venus and Josephine Bérengé, "the herbivorous and carnivorous girl." Hence a twentieth-century account of famous children lists next to "Josephine" (that is, Marie-Angélique) LeBlanc a certain "Marie-Angélique" (Josephine?) Bérengé, born 1808, whose primary claim to fame was her strange food preferences. As the author notes: "In 1820 she was shown in Paris on the stage of the Théâtre Saqui under the name of the herbivorous and carniverous girl. She lived on grass and raw meat only, and from the age of two refused all other food. On stage, she was offered a cabbage and a raw chop that she devoured. Her extraordinary voracity allowed her to eat for hours on end without feeling ill."[78] The exhibition of wildness continued then (and continues still today) to fascinate us with that frightening, yet compelling sense of boundaries transgressed, taboos violated, conventions displaced.

Problematic as an example of the Self, too "tame" to remain wholly Other, Marie-Angélique LeBlanc fit neither category sufficiently to sustain popular interest or noble munificence during her short lifetime. In these texts, however, she remains a border phenomenon, a scientific and philosophical curiosity. Her origins forever a mystery, she figures that silent object of representation to whom, as Donna Haraway writes, "history has forbidden the strategic illusion of self-identity."[79] A passive resource for the speculation of eighteenth-century authors, the wild girl of Champagne lives on in the twentieth-century imagination as an enigmatic Other, one who forever invites—yet ultimately resists—definitive interpretation.

NOTES

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1. Lord Monboddo [James Burnett], "Preface," in Mme Hecquet, *Account of a Savage Girl Caught*

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Wild in the Woods of Champagne, trans. William Robertson (Edinburgh: A. Kincaid and J. Bell, 1768), xvi.

2. See Bruno Latour and Stephen Woolgar, *Laboratory Life: The Social Construction of Scientific Facts* (London: Sage, 1979) and Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973) for more on the intersections between scientific and literary discourse.

3. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 157.

4. A more complete list of these creatures can be found in Cornelius de Pauw, *Défense des Recherches philosophiques sur les Américains* (Berlin, 1774), 167–70.

5. Roland Barthes describes a "poetics of monstrosity" in the anatomical illustrations of the *Encyclopédie* as a representational strategy founded upon transgression and visual disproportion in "Image, raison, déraison," in *L'Univers de L'Encyclopédie*, ed. Roland Barthes, Robert Mauzi, and Jean-Pierre Seguin (Paris: Les Libraires Associés, 1964), 15.

6. Franck Tinland, *L'Homme sauvage: Homo ferus et Homo sylvestris, de l'animal à l'homme* (Paris: Payot, 1968), 250.

7. Anon. [M. A. M. N.], "Lettre écrite de Châlons, en Champagne, le 9 décembre 1731, par M. A. M. N... au sujet de la Fille sauvage trouvée aux environs de cette cille," *Mercure de France* (December 1731): 2983–89; Anon., "Extrait d'une autre lettre sur le même sujet," *Mercure de France* (December 1731): 2989–91; Mme Hecquet [attributed to Charles-Marie de La Condamine], *Histoire d'une jeune fille sauvage trouvée dans les bois à l'âge de dix ans*, ed. Franck Tinland (Bordeaux: Editions Ducros, 1971); Louis Racine, "Eclaircissement sur la fille sauvage dont il est parlé dans l'Epître sur l'homme," *Oeuvres de Louis Racine* (Paris: Le Normant, 1808), 6:575–82.

8. One must recall that at his capture in 1724, the "wild boy" Peter of Hanover elicited a flurry of interest and literary productions: a number of pamplets, a sermon, a book-length satire by Daniel Defoe, and an anonymous poem, "The Savage." For more on this subgenre of "wild child" literature, see Maximillian E. Novak, "The Wild Man Comes to Tea," in *The Wild Man Within: An Image in Western Thought from the Renaissance to Romanticism*, ed. Edward Dudley and Maximillian E. Novak (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1972), 183–221.

9. For the individual histories of these feral children, see Lucien Malson, *Wolf Children and the Problem of Human Nature*, trans. Edmund Fawcett, Peter Ayrton, and Joan White (New York: New Left Books, 1972), 39–43. On Mlle LeBlanc's impact on contemporary culture, see Franck Tinland, "Préface" in Hecquet, *Histoire d'une jeune fille sauvage* 12–13, 29–42.

10. "Chaque situation de la vie scolaire suggère un modelage, qu'il s'agisse des heures passées par les écolières assises sur leur banc ou de leurs rares occasions de mouvement. En toutes circonstances les filles doivent respirer la modestie et la décence, leurs attributs les plus glorieux." Martine Sonnet, *L'Education des filles au temps des lumières* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1987), 157.

11. "[L]e règlement de l'internat organise l'espace et le temps éducatifs, comme il modèle le corps, pour que rien ne puisse se produire." Sonnet, 161.

12. "Quand elles prendront leurs chemises elles feront en sorte que personne ne les voie nues, elles ne se regarderont point non plus elles-memes." Sonnet, 155.

13. From the code of "les Dames de la Croix": "[L]es élèves prendront garde qu'il est très indécent de s'appuyer contre la muraille ou contre le dos de sa chaise; . . . de s'étendre les bras et les jambes, de montrer ses pieds, de ronger ses ongles avec ses dents et autres choses semblables." Cited by Sonnet, 158.

14. The extent of La Condamine's involvement with Mlle Leblanc is hard to determine. Most sources report that he interviewed her at length in 1747, sixteen years after her capture and subsequent "taming" in the convent. According to one source, however, La Condamine conducted a kind of experiment on her in 1731, right after she left the d'Epinay estate. As Buirette de Verrières writes: "M. de la Condamine s'occupa à étudier les premières moeurs de cette sauvage, et par l'effet des objets qu'il soumettait à sa vue, chercha à démêler en elle l'âge de la nature, son origine et son premier état." However, Verrières concludes, "Mais cette étude ne lui laissa que des conjectures et rien de positif." Claude-Rémy Buirette de Verrières, *Annales historiques de la ville et comté-pairie de Châlons-sur-Marne*, Première partie (Châlons: Chez Seneuze, 1788), lxxviii.

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15. Londa Schiebinger, *Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 112–13.

16. "[E]lle n'est point de Norvège, (comme on l'a dit), on croit plutôt qu'elle est née dans les Isles Antilles de l'Amérique, qui appartiennent aux François, comme la Gadaloupe, la Martinique, S. Christophe, S. Domingue, &c. parce qu'un Particulier de Châlons, qui a été à la Gadaloupe, lui ayant montré de la *Cassave*, ou *Manioque*, qui est un Pain dont se nourrissent les Sauvages des Antilles, elle s'écria de joye sur ce Pain, et en ayant pris un morceau elle le mangea avec grant [*sic*] appétit." "Lettre écrite de Châlons," 2983–84.

17. For more on contemporary debates about language, see Hans Aarsleff, *From Locke to Saussure: Essays on the Study of Language and Intellectual History* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1982); Jacques Chouillet, "Descartes et le problème de l'origine des langues," *Dix-huitième siècle* 4 (1972): 39–60; and chapter 10 of Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, trans. Robert M. Wallace (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983).

18. "[E]lle appelle un Filet 'Debily,' dans le patois de son Pays; pour dire bon jour, Fille, on dit, selon elle; 'Yas yas, fioul,' ajoutant que quand on l'appelloit, on disoit 'Riam riam, fioul'; c'est ce qui fait connoître qu'elle commence à entendre la signification des termes françois, les interprétant par ceux de son Pays." "Lettre écrite de Châlons," 2987.

19. "On remarquoit que tout ce qu'elle mangeoit, elle le mangeoit cru . . . Pour l'eau, sa boisson ordinaire, elle la boit dans un seau, la tirant comme une Vache, et étant à genoux." "Lettre écrite de Châlons," 2985–86, 2987.

20. "Nous vîmes ce jour-là, avec une espèce d'horreur, cette fille manger plus d'une livre et demie de boeuf cru, sans y donner un coup de dent, puis se jeter avec une espèce de fureur sur un lapreau qu'on mit devant elle, qu'elle déshabilla en un clin d'oeil avec une facilité qui suppose un grand usage, puis le dévorer en un instant sans le vider." "Extrait d'une autre lettre," 2990.

21. As Jean-Louis Flandrin has argued, although the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries constituted one of the filthiest periods in history, contemporary manuals of civility reveal an obsession with cleanliness. Many new prescriptions for table manners, for example, date from this era: use of the fingers tended more and more to be forbidden, as did transferring food directly from serving plates to the mouth, and individual sets of silverware were *de rigueur*. See Flandrin, "Distinction Through Taste," in *A History of Private Life*, vol. 3, "Passions of the Renaissance," ed. Roger Chartier, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1989), 265–67; and Georges Vigarello, *Le Propre et le sale. L'hygiène du corps depuis le Moyen Age* (Paris: Seuil, 1985).

22. In *Emile* (1762), Rousseau counsels: "Il importe surtout . . . de ne point rendre les enfants carnassiers; si ce n'est pour leur santé, c'est pour leur caractère; car, de quelque manière qu'on explique l'expérience, il est certain que les grands mangeurs de viande sont en général cruels et féroces plus que les autres hommes; cette observation est de tous les lieux et de tous les temps." Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile, ou de l'éducation* (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1966), 196.

23. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Origin of Table Manners: Introduction to a Science of Mythology,* trans. John and Doreen Weightman (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), 505–7.

24. See Flandrin, 267, for more on the ambiguous connotations of cleanliness and *propreté* in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century usage.

25. For more on the changing ambitions and administrative plans behind the many prisons, foundling homes, and insane asylums constructed in the eighteenth century, see Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); *Deviants and the Abandoned in French Society. Selections from the Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, vol. 4, ed. Robert Forster and Orest Ranum, trans. Elborg Forster and Patricia M. Ranum (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1978); Jean-Pierre Gutton, *La Société et les pauvres en Europe (XVIe-XVIIIe siècles)* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1974); Owen Hufton, *The Poor of Eighteenth-Century France, 1750–1789* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1974); and Camille Bloch, *L'Assistance et l'Etat en France à la veille de la Révolution* (Paris: A. Picard et fils, 1908).

26. "M. l'Evêque a pris soin depuis de la placer dans l'Hôpital Général de cette Ville, où l'on reçoit les Enfans des pauvres Habitans, de l'un et de l'autre sexe, pour les y nourrir jusqu'à l'âge de quinze à seize

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ans, qu'on leur fait apprendre des Métiers. C'est là qu'on tâche de l'humaniser tout-à-fait, et de l'instruire. . . . La Supérieure de l'Hôpital dit qu'elle sçait bien broder. . . . On l'instruit cependant dans la Religion Chrétienne, elle dit qu'elle veut être baptisée dans le 'Paradis Terrestre,' terme dont elle se sert pour signifier nos Eglises." "Lettre écrite de Châlons," 2986, 2988.

27. "Cette étonnante fille, triste exemple de ce que nous serions sans l'éducation et la société." Louis Racine, "Epître II sur l'homme," in *Œuvres de Louis Racine* (Paris: Le Normant, 1808), 2:124.

28. "Et ce qu'étoient alors nos sauvages aïeux, / Une fille en nos jours la fait voir à nos yeux. / Ce n'étoient point des mots qu'articuloit sa bouche: / Il n'en sortoit qu'un son, cri perçant et farouche. / Des vivans animaux que déchiroit sa main, / Les morceaux palpitans assouvissoient sa faim. / Dès l'enfance elle erra de montagne en montagne, / Et souilla ses déserts du sang de sa compagne. / Pourquoi l'immola-t-elle à ses propres fureurs? / Quel intérêt si grand vint séparer deux coeurs / Qu'unissoient leurs forêts, leur âge et leurs misères? / Reconnoissons les moeurs de nos antiques pères." Racine, "Epître," 2:124.

29. "Les chaînes, les prisons, les gibets, les tourmens, / De la société furent les fondemens." Racine, "Epître," 125.

30. "Le sang des animaux, si défendu aux hommes après le déluge, étoit son nectar." Louis Racine, "Eclaircissement," 6:578–79.

31. "[L]a plus violente de ses tentations, c'est celle de boire le sang de quelqu'animal vivant. Elle-même m'a avoué que quand elle voyoit un enfant, elle se sentoit tourmentée de cette envie. Lorsqu'elle me parloit ainsi, ma fille, jeune encore, étoit avec moi; elle remarqua sur son visage quelqu'émotion à l'aveu d'une pareille tentation, et elle lui dit aussitôt en riant: "Ne craignez rien, Mademoiselle, Dieu m'a bien changée." Racine, "Eclaircissement," 6:581–82.

32. "Après toutes les peines que l'on a prises pour adoucir sa férocité, elle en conserve quelques restes dans les regards et les manières: elle n'aime ni notre nourriture, ni la société, où elle ne reste que par obéissance à Dieu. La religion dont elle est instruite, l'empêche, dit-elle, de retourner dans les bois." Racine, "Epître," 2:124.

33. The *Histoire d'une jeune fille sauvage* was published in 1755, reprinted in 1761, and translated into English in 1760 and 1768 as *The Account* [or *History*] *of a Savage Girl Caught Wild in the Woods of Champagne*. For more on the popularity of the wild girl legend in Great Britain, see below, note 77.

34. La Condamine notes that he had "facilité l'impression de l'ouvrage au profit de Demoiselle LeBlanc, dans la vue de lui procurer une situation plus heureuse, en intéressant à son sort ceux qui liraient son aventure" (Charles-Marie de La Condamine, "Lettre à M. de Boissy, de l'Académie française," *Mercure de France* [April 1755]: 75). Monboddo reiterates the claim of profits returning to the wild girl in his preface to the 1768 English translation, where he remarks that this text is rather hard to find, as most of the copies are "in the hands of Madamoiselle LeBlanc, the extraordinary personage whose history it contains, who makes a small profit by the sale of them." He adds in a note, "For the satisfaction of any of the readers of this pamphlet who may happen to be at Paris, and have the curiosity of paying a visit to Madamoiselle LeBlanc, I here give her address in the year 1765; but whether she has since changed her lodgings, I do not know. It was thus: 'Rue St. Antoine presque vis à vis la vieille rue du Temple au troisième étage, sur le Devant.'" Monboddo, "Preface," in *Account of a Savage Girl*, iii.

35. La Condamine, "Lettre à M. de Boissy," 75.

36. Indeed, Graffigny appropriated ethnographic data into her fiction with such artistry that her text was long considered a reference work or source book on Peru. For more on Graffigny's "Peruvian" exoticism, see chapter 2 of Douthwaite, *Exotic Women: Literary Heroines and Cultural Strategies in Ancien Régime France* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1992).

37. One could not choose a race more repugnant to the French, except perhaps the squalid Hottentots; both peoples were felt to inhabit the extreme boundaries of humanity. On the etymology of Eskimo as "eater of raw meat," see Antoine, abbé Prévost, *Histoire générale des voyages* (Paris: Chez Didot, 1757), 15:13. Buffon asserts that Eskimos (like their cousins the Laplanders) are "all equally gross, superstitious and stupid" (Georges Louis Leclerc, Count de Buffon, *Natural History, General and Particular, by the Count Buffon*, trans. William Smellie [London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1812], 3:305). Diderot argued that the Eskimos had so far degenerated that they no longer even belonged to the human species (cited by Tinland, *L'Homme sauvage*, 266).

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38. Mme Hecquet [La Condamine], *The History of a Savage Girl, Caught Wild in the Woods of Champagne. Newly Translated from the French of Madam H——t* (London: R. Dursley, T. Davidson, et al., [1760]), 6–7. Subsequent parenthetical quotations of Hecquet's work will refer to this edition, unless otherwise noted.

39. Richard Bernheimer, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1952), 1.

40. "'C'est une Sauvage!' me dis-je à moi-même: et, sur le champ, me rappelant mes lectures, j'engage la foule à se contenir, je prends une branche, je vais au-devant de l'étrangère . . . . Je ne m'étais pas trompée. Elle jette son arme, court à ma rencontre, prend la branche, la partage." Jean-Claude Gorjy, *Victorine, par l'auteur de 'Blançay,' &c.* (Paris: Guillot, 1789), 1:143.

41. It is worth noting that Rousseau also mentions wild children in the *Discours sur l'inégalité*, but since he uses them only as examples of quadruped and biped locomotion, he enters into very little detail. See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité* (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1971), 160–61, n. 1.

42. For more on European legends associated with apes, consult H. W. Janson, *Apes and Ape Lore in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1952; repr. Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1976). Claude Blanckaert charts the fluid boundaries between man and ape in European thought of the early modern period in "Premier des singes, dernier des hommes?" *Alliage* 7–8 (Printemps-été, 1991): 113–29.

43. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 149. On Linnaeus's concept of science as a process of logical classification, see James L. Larson, *Reason and Experience: The Representation of the Natural Order in the Work of Carl von Linné* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1971).

44. Carl Linnaeus, *Systema naturae* (1735; facsimile of the first edition), trans. M. S. J. Engel-Ledeboer and H. Engel (Nieuwkoop, Netherlands: B. de Graaf, 1964), 30.

45. Knut Hagberg, *Carl Linnaeus*, trans. Alan Blair (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1953), 93.

46. Cited in Gunnar Broberg, "*Homo sapiens*: Linnaeus's Classification of Man" in *Linnaeus: The Man and His Work*, ed. Tore Frängsmyr (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1983), 186.

47. Hagberg, *Carl Linnaeus*, 108.

48. Broberg, "*Homo Spaiens*," 176.

49. Linnaeus, *Systema naturae*, 19.

50. For more on this work, see C. D. O'Malley and H. W. Magoun, "Early Concepts of the Anthropomorpha," *Physis: Rivista di storia della scienza* 4 (1962): 53–54.

51. Edward Tyson, cited in O'Malley and Magoun, "Early Concepts," 44.

52. For the history of this dainty chimp and her association with modesty, see Schiebinger, *Nature's Body*, 99–106; and George Rousseau's chapter, "Madame Chimpanzee," in his *Enlightenment Crossings: Pre- and Post-modern Discourses Anthropological* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1991), 198–209.

53. Schiebinger, *Nature's Body*, 105

54. "Prehendebat haec Tulpiana vas potorium una manu, iustulit operculum altera, dimidiumque eduxit, os suum palma abstergens; cum cubitum iret, caput pulvinari superinjecit, stragulo humeros cooperuit suos, & ad modum honestae matronae, tuta quierit." Linnaeus, "Anthropomorpha," in *Amoenitates academicae* (Stockholm: Laurentius Salvius, 1763), 6:70.

55. Linnaeus, *Systema naturae*, 18. Linnaeus's later experiments in hybridization, however, raised doubts over this doctrine of fixity; in later editions of the *Systema natura,* Linnaeus no longer insisted on fixed species. See Roland Mousnier, *Progrès scientifique et technique au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Plon, 1958), 88–94, for more on this issue.

56. Jean Duvignaud claims that it was impossible for eighteenth-century thinkers to conceive of links between apes and man in *Le Langage perdu: Essai sur la différence anthropologique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1973), 39.

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57. Janson, *Apes and Ape Lore*, 335.

58. For more on Buffon's dispute with Linnaean method, consult Phillip R. Sloan, "The Buffon-Linnaeus Controversy," *Isis* 67, no. 238 (Spring 1976): 356–75.

59. Buffon, *Natural History*, 10:25. "L'âme, la pensée, la parole ne dépendent donc pas de la forme ou de l'organisation du corps; rien ne prouve mieux que c'est un don particulier et fait à l'homme seul, puisque l'orang-outang, qui ne parle ni ne pense, a néanmoins le corps, les membres, les sens, le cerveau, et la langue entièrement semblables à l'homme, puisqu'il peut faire ou contrefaire tous les mouvemens, toutes les actions humaines, et que cependant il ne fait aucun acte de l'homme." Buffon, *Œuvres complètes de Buffon avec les suppléments* (Paris: P. Duménil, 1835), 6:259. Buffon's *Histoire naturelle générale et particulière* was a massive enterprise, lavishly illustrated and published in thirty-six volumes from 1749 to 1783 with the help of his collaborators (notably the naturalist Daubenton) and his successors.

60. For more on this anecdote, attributed to Diderot, and contemporary interest in language, see Robert Wokler, "Perfectible Apes in Decadent Cultures: Rousseau's Anthropology Revisited," *Daedalus* 107, no. 3 (1978): 107–34. There are, of course, many earlier sources on the acquisition of language and the identity of man's "natural" tongue, going all the way back to Descartes and the *langage des bêtes*, including Edward Tyson's *Orang-outang, sive Homo Sylvestris* (1699); Samuel Butler's satirical *Hudibras* (1663–78); and G. H. Bougeant's *Amusement philosophique sur le langage des bêtes* (1739), which are treated in a longer version of this essay.

61. Buffon, *Natural History*, 10:26. "Vous comparez, dira-t-on, fort injustement le singe des bois avec l'homme des villes; c'est à côté de l'homme sauvage, de l'homme auquel l'éducation n'a rien transmis, qu'il faut le placer pour les juger l'un de l'autre: et a-t-on une idée juste de l'homme dans l'état de pure nature?" Buffon, *Œuvres complètes*, 6:259.

62. Buffon, *Natural History*, 10:507–8; *Oeuvres complètes*, 6:259.

63. Buffon, *Natural History*, 5:141; "Ainsi l'état de pure nature est un état connu."

64. Ibid. "Ainsi l'état de pure nature est un état connu: c'est le sauvage vivant dans le désert, mais vivant en famille, connoissant ses enfans, connu d'eux, usant de la parole et se faisant entendre. La fille sauvage ramassée dans les bois de Champagne, l'homme trouvé dans les forêts d'Hanovre, ne prouvent pas le contraire: ils avoient vécu dans une solitude absolue; ils ne pouvoient donc avoir aucune idée de société, aucun usage des signes ou de la parole: mais s'ils se fussent seulement rencontrés, la pente de la nature les auroit entraînés, le plaisir les auroit réunis; attachés l'un à l'autre, ils se seroient bientôt entendus; ils auroient d'abord parlé la langue de l'amour entre eux, et ensuite celle de la tendresse entre eux et leurs enfans." Buffon, *Œuvres complètes*, 5:157.

65. For more on the relationship between the ideas of Monboddo and Rousseau, see Arthur O. Lovejoy, "Monboddo and Rousseau," *Modern Philology* 30 (1933): 275–96.

66. Johnson's remark is cited by Novak, 194. On Monboddo's eccentricities, see the entry in *British Authors Before 1800*, ed. Stanley Kunitz and Howard Haycraft (New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1952), 359.

67. Lord Monboddo (James Burnett), *Of the Origin and Progress of Language* (Edinburgh: J. Balfour, 1774), 1:191, 195.

68. Letter from Monboddo to Sir John Pringle, 16 June 1773, in William Knight, *Lord Monboddo and Some of His Contemporaries* (London: John Murray, 1900), 84–85.

69. "Quelle conquête, quelle vraie gloire, si nous réussissions à rendre aussi habiles, et meilleurs que nous, des animaux qui n'ont été jusqu'ici que brutes et méchants!" Gaspard Guillard de Beaurieu, *Cours d'histoire naturelle, ou tableau de la nature* (Paris: Chez Lacombs, 1770), 1:332.

70. "N'a-t-elle jamais regretté les bois d'où on l'a tirée. . . . Quand en sortant des mains de la Nature, on voit nos moeurs, nos injustices, etc. si on ne retourne pas dans les forêts, au moins doit-on n'occuper dans la société, que la place du bon et honnête paysan." Beaurieu, 1:346.

71. Morelly, *Code de la nature ou le véritable esprit de ses lois* (Paris, 1755); René Louis de Voyer, marquis d'Argenson, *Considérations sur le gouvernement de la France* (Paris, 1764); Gabriel Bonnot de Mably, *Traité de la législation ou principe des lois* (Paris, 1776). Albert Soboul presents a comprehensive

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overview of these currents in eighteenth-century French literature and political thought in his chapter, "Lumières, critique sociale et utopie pendant le XVIIIe siècle français," in *Histoire générale du socialisme*, ed. Jacques Droz (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1972), 1:103–94.

72. "Qu'on ne me cite pas le jeune sauvage de Hamel, la fille de la forêt de Songi et d'autres individus ainsi abandonnés. Ils vivaient isolés, et leur exemple, comme l'observe très bien Mr. Schreber, ne nous apprend absolument rien touchant l'état naturel de l'homme, puisqu'ils n'y étaient point. C'est vouloir étudier la Physiologie, par l'observation d'un homme attaqué de la plus violente des maladies." Eberhard August Wilhelm von Zimmermann, *Zoologie géographique* (Cassel: De l'imprimerie francaise de Cassel, 1784), 203.

73. "La découverte (de ces sauvages) cause d'abord une grande rumeur dans les gazettes, ils finissent par mourir ignorés dans quelque hôpital de fous. L'observation de ce genre d'infirme ne peut jeter la moindre lumière sur l'état primitif de notre espèce, ce n'est point d'après ces exceptions qu'il faut étudier l'homme." Bory de Saint-Vincent, *Dictionnaire classique d'histoire naturelle*, cited by Tinland, *L'Homme sauvage*, 134.

74. Tinland, *L'Homme sauvage*, 138–47.

75. "Tout le monde a pu la voir pendant dix-huit mois de séjour dans notre capitale, et vérifier l'énorme protubérance de ses fesses, et l'apparance brutale de sa figure," "Ce que notre Boschismanne avoit de plus rebutant, c'étoit la physionomie." Georges Cuvier, "Extrait d'observations faites sur le Cadavre d'une femme connue à Paris et à Londres sous le nom de Vénus Hottentotte," *Mémoires du muséum d'histoire naturelle* 3 (1817): 263, 264. The tragic life story sketched by Cuvier reveals the brutal practices employed to fill the European appetite for "curiosities": "Un Anglais lui avoit fait espérer une grande fortune si elle venoit s'offrir à la curiosité des Européens; mais il avoit fini par l'abandonner à un montreur d'animaux de Paris, chez lequel elle est morte d'une maladie inflammatoire et éruptive," (Cuvier, 262). For more on the gender politics of this figure, a major "find" of nineteenth-century anthropology, consult Sander L. Gilman, "Black Bodies, White Bodies: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth-Century Art, Medicine, and Literature" in *Race, Writing, and "Difference,"* ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1986), 223–61.

76. Janson, *Apes and Ape Lore*, 336.

77. The wild girl may have lost favor among the French, but her story enjoyed a curious resurgence of interest in early nineteenth-century Britain, notably in Scotland. My recent research has uncovered ten chapbooks and one broadside based in the *Histoire d'une jeune fille sauvage*, with titles such as *An Account of the Surprising Savage Girl* and *La Belle Sauvage: The True and Surprising History of a Savage Girl, Found Wild in the Woods of Champagne*, published between 1795 and 1831. Many of these cheap publications include portraits of Leblanc on the cover, representing her in a variety of guises—from a threatening, dirty-looking savage wielding a club to a well-coiffed demoiselle in a fashionable décolletage. This popular literature and its iconography will be discussed in my book, currently in progress, entitled *The "Wild Girl" and Natural Man: Literature, Science and Sensationalism in the Enlightenment.*

78. "En 1820, elle fut montrée à Paris sur la scène du théâtre Saqui sous le nom de fille herbivore et carnivore. Elle ne vivait que d'herbe et de viande crue et, depuis l'âge de deux ans refusait toute autre nourriture. Sur la scène on lui offrait un chou et une côtelette crue qu'elle dévorait. Son extraordinaire voracité lui permettait de manger des heures entières sans se faire mal." Claude-Edmond Magny, *Les Enfants célèbres* (Paris: Editions d'art Lucien Mazenod, 1949), 284.

79. Donna Haraway, "The Promises of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics for Inappropriate/d Others," in *Cultural Studies*, ed. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula Treichler (New York: Routledge, 1992), 329.

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